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REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Evaluation of the regional project RLA/79/031: Programme on joint studies on Latin American economic integration

Addendum

Comments of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the regional project RLA/79/031: Programme on joint studies on Latin American economic integration" (A/45/77-E/1990/10).

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* A/45/50.

** E/1990/92.

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ANNEX

Comments of the Secretary-General

I. GENERAL

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the regional project RLA/79/031: Programme on joint studies on Latin American economic integration (ECIEL)" contains an evaluation of the type requested from the Unit by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of its resolution 42/218 of 21 December 1987. The report provides information on the background of the project, including the organizational structure, the results of previous evaluations, an assessment of project outputs, the results of consultations by the Inspector and, finally, the conclusions of the Inspector.

2. The basic conclusion of the report is that the ECIEL programme is setting up a network of government and private institutions of great importance for socio-economic studies in the region. The report notes the need to modernize and simplify the programme's institutional structures, including the way its documents are prepared and published. With regard to publications, the Inspector considers that the future work programme should place emphasis exclusively on matters directly related to Latin American integration. The outstanding issue raised by the report relates to the problem of "sustainability".

3. The Secretary-General agrees with the basic thrust of the report. UNDP has long supported ECIEL, and contributed approximately $2.2 million between 1974 and 1984. ECIEL was created to train social scientists and economists and produce studies on economic integration and development. As indicated in the report, an evaluation mission found studies produced to be numerous and of high quality, but often on topics unrelated to integration. Another goal of the programme was to establish a network of institutions: there were 72 members in 1988. As the report indicates, the "sustainability" of the institution is a major issue.

II. RECOMMENDATION

4. The Inspector recommends that UNDP should finance an assembly of representatives of the member institutions to consider (a) the continued existence of ECIEL, whether linked or not to a government body, (b) the simplification and modernization of its structure and (c) the reorientation of its work programmes and changes in its types of publications.

5. To address those issues, UNDP is willing to co-finance the proposed assembly of representatives on the basis of joint financing. To this effect, discussions have been undertaken with the Government of Brazil and with member institutions. Such support should also be linked to a broad analysis of the feasibility and sustainability of ECIEL.